(c) if so, whether Planning Commission has already forwarded its plan;

(d) whether projected investment in dedicated freight corridors during Eleventh Five Year Plan has been fixed at Rs. 30000 crores; and

(e) by when work is likely to start on these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However pre-feasibility studies for four Dedicated Freight Corridors on the following routes have been carried out by Ministry of Railways:-

(a) East West Corridor (Kolkata-Mumbai)

(b) North South Corridor (Delhi-Chennai)

(c) East South Corridor (Kharagpur-Vijayawada)

(d) Southern Corridor (Goa-Chennai)

A decision on the corridors will be taken based on traffic & financial considerations and infrastructural requirements of the Railways.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Change of old passenger coaches

846. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has time bound plan to discard all railway passenger coaches which are more than 15 years old;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps Railways propose to take to introduce a system whereby all such old coaches are changed within the next 5 years in phased manner in all zones; and

(d) the details of such plans and investment proposed over the next 5 years including investment for capacity enhancement for coach building?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, Sir. The codal life of a passenger coach is 25 years, A Mid-life rehabilitation is undertaken after 12-15 years of usage so that coaches can be kept in good service condition till the end of codal life.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) To take care of the increasing requirement of passenger coaches in the country and the substantial gap between production and requirement, work for setting up a New Coach Factory is in progress at Rae Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, Estimated to cost Rs. 1685 crores, it shall have a capacity to manufacture 1000 coaches per annum.

In the Budget speech of 2008-09, hon'ble MR announced the setting up a new Rail Coach Factory at Palghat, Kerala. Government of Kerala has promised to make 1000 acres of land available free of cost for this project. Estimated to cost Rs. 1215 crores, this factory shall manufacture 600 coaches per year. Requisite approval for this project is under process.

In the Budget speech of 2009-10, hon'ble MR has announced setting up of a new coach factory in state-of-the-art facility to manufacture about 500 EMU/MEMU and Metro coaches per annum in Kancharapara-Halisahar Railway Complex where Railway land is available. This unit will be set up in joint venture/public private partnership. Details of the project are being worked out.

Repair of Rail bridges

847. DR. RAM PRAKASH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether fitness certificate has been obtained to run trains on all major rail bridges;

(b) whether Railways have the design of all rail bridges; and

(c) the number of bridges constructed during British rule the repair of which has been carried out by the Centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Train operations of passenger carrying trains on a new Bridge are started only after receipt of sanction from Commissioner of Railway Safety. Further, to ensure the safety of passenger and trains, a regular and rigorous system of inspection of Bridges is followed on Indian Railways. Under this system, all the Bridges are thoroughly inspected once a year as a focused attention. In addition, the inspecting officials also inspect the Bridges during their routine inspections.

(b) All Railway Bridges have been constructed either as per standard drawings issued by Research Designs & Standards Organization (RDSO) or as per designs made by Zonal Railways. Completion drawings of some of old Bridges are not available. However, in case of such Bridges also, safety is completely ensured by a focused attention during inspections.

(c) Rehabilitation/rebuilding/strengthening of Bridges is an ongoing work on Indian Railways. Rehabilitation/rebuilding/strengthening of Bridges is undertaken on the basis of their physical condition as ascertained during regular inspections carried out in the field and not on the basis of age. Therefore, all old Bridges do not necessarily require rehabilitation/rebuilding/strengthening. During the last five years, a total of 6720 no. of Rail Bridges have been rehabilitated/rebuilt/ strengthened on Indian Railway system.

Merger of Braithwaite and Co. Ltd. with Railways

†848.SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi